

York Region Food Charter

Agriculture & Agri-Food Advisory Committee

What is the Food Charter?

2013 Charter

- Guidance for the development of coordinated food-related policies and programs
- Opportunity to form connections and networks to support the food system.
- The process to develop the Charter included public consultations and an online survey.



YORK REGION FOOD CHARTER

A GUIDING DOCUMENT FOR THE
DEVELOPMENT OF COORDINATED
FOOD-RELATED POLICIES AND
PROGRAMS IN YORK REGION

We believe a collaborative and integrated approach is essential to create a healthy and just food system for all.

We value...

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

- Access to a variety of healthy and affordable food in all neighbourhoods and facilities.
- Food policies and practices to improve and inspire health.
- The importance of food for physical, mental, emotional and cultural wellbeing.
- Community ownership of healthy, locally-grown and processed food.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

- Economic development plans that ensure robust and financially sustainable agriculture.
- Innovative food and related industries that unite producer, processor, distributor, health, tourism, education and hospitality sectors.
- Locally-grown traditional and world foods.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- Rural and urban agriculture practices that protect biodiversity and improve the health of our land, soil, water, and air.
- Integrating agriculture and food into energy and climate change policies and strategies.
- Protection of agricultural lands and a streamlined regulatory framework.
- Reducing food and packaging waste among consumers, retailers, processors and producers.

EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

- The basic right of all residents to safe, nutritious, culturally appropriate, accessible food.
- Dignified access to food for all.
- Fair compensation and a safe and respectful work environment in the agriculture and food sectors.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

- Food literacy and skills for all residents, with a focus on food growing, healthy cooking, and composting.
- Education that supports opportunities in the agriculture and food sector.
- Understanding the connections between food, farming, health and the environment.



The York Region Food Charter aligns with a food movement across Canada, promoting a system from farm to plate that provides access to local, affordable and nutritious food. The York Region Food Charter is a vision of thriving urban and rural communities where residents, businesses, and governments are creating a resilient food system.

The Update Process

- **January 2023** - York Region Food Council voted to update the Charter
- **Spring & Summer 2023** - Formed Food Charter Working Group and drafted work plan
- **Summer & Fall 2023** - Consulted with the Food Council & Working Group to create a new Draft Food Charter
- **Fall 2023 - Winter 2024** - Consultations



The Update Process: Consultations

CONSULTATION	TIMELINE	PARTICIPANTS
Food for Change Event	November 30th, 2023	30
Targeted Focus Groups	March-April, 2024	26
Survey	February-March, 2024	167
Sector Focus Groups	Nov 2023-Feb 2024	68
Georgina Island Partners	July-August 2024	4

Engagement of 293 individuals

The Update Process

- **Spring 2024** - Analyzed feedback & incorporated into the Food Charter and Action Document
- **Summer 2024** - Final consultations
- **Fall 2024**- Graphic Design & Food Council finalization
- **December 2024** - Food Council approved the Food Charter & accompanying documents



Food Charter Documents

1. Food Charter



**YORK REGION
FOOD
CHARTER**

The York Region Food Charter outlines collective values and priorities and is a guiding document for food-related policies and action.

The Food Charter is a vision of thriving urban and rural communities as well as First Nations and Indigenous Communities where residents, organizations, businesses, and governments work together to create a resilient food system that fosters healthy communities.

The Food Charter is centered on food sovereignty¹ and community-determined food and agriculture systems. This document is intended to build connection and responsibility to the land, and healthier food systems.



We seek to meaningfully engage diverse voices that represent York Region's communities and address issues in appropriate and relevant ways. By addressing food related issues, we strive to have a local impact while working towards systemic change in food, community and social justice. This includes reconciliation and supporting the resurgence of knowledge and traditional ways of knowing and doing.

The York Region food system is built on a history of oppression that continues to this day. The impact of this oppression is vast and includes a disconnection from the land and the loss of natural ways of living on the land, such as freely foraging and harvesting food. The ongoing process of colonialism has attempted to undermine the traditional and cultural food traditions of Indigenous, Black and racialized communities. We recognize that these communities continue to be impacted disproportionately by food insecurity, which can only be addressed by self-governance and support, if requested.

OUR VALUES



01. Equity, Social Justice & Food Security¹

We value the right to food and community-determined food and agriculture systems². We believe everyone should have enough income to effectively prevent food insecurity³.

We Support

- Evidence-based income and social policies which have been proven to reduce food insecurity.
- Community engagement, advocacy and action around income-related issues.
- Collaboration with governments and community partners in First Nations, Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized communities to determine priorities for action to address food insecurity and poverty⁴.

02. Health & Well-being

We value the role of food in promoting health, including physical, mental, emotional, cultural, social and spiritual well-being.



We Support

- Equitable and dignified access to safe, nutritious, culturally relevant, and affordable food.
- Food programs, policies and practices to improve, support and promote holistic⁵ well-being.
- The role of food and nutrition in preventing and managing diseases.
- Reducing health inequities⁶ so that everyone has the same opportunities for health regardless of social, economic and spatial⁷ and environmental factors.
- Body liberation⁸ and the importance of creating positive, holistic relationships with food, culture and the land.

Food Charter Documents

1. **Food Charter**

2. **Infographic** (Online & Printable)



03. Local Agri-Food Sector⁴

We value the role of the agri-food sector in cultivating a strong economy and equitable local food system while ensuring environmental sustainability.

04. Environmental Stewardship

We value a sustainable food system that protects and enhances the natural environment while working alongside First Nations and Indigenous Communities.



05. Knowledge & Sharing

We value sharing knowledge and supporting food literacy⁵ so that all community members can confidently choose to grow, cook, compost, or participate in food-related careers, contributing to a more sustainable future for the next seven generations.

Food Charter Documents

- 1. Food Charter
- 2. Infographic
- 3. Action Document

YORK REGION FOOD CHARTER ACTION DOCUMENT



	York Region Food Council	Working Groups	Municipal Gov	Regional Gov	Organizations	Businesses	Public Institutions
Equity, Social Justice & Food Security							
Advocate at all levels of government for evidence-based policies which have been proven to reduce food insecurity. This could include advocating for the implementation of a livable minimum wage, increasing social assistance rates and enhancing the Canada Disability Benefit.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Support partners with the creation of advocacy tools and training geared towards municipal, provincial and federal governments. Use these tools to support the development of robust policies that ensure adequate incomes so that all York Region residents have equitable access to food.	✓	✓	✓				
Collaboration with governments and community partners in First Nations, Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized communities to determine priorities for action to address food insecurity and poverty.	✓				✓		
Increase awareness of poverty, food insecurity, and income related issues for politicians, policymakers and the public through channels such as social media, events, and press releases.	✓		✓	✓	✓		
Empower people with lived experience of food insecurity and poverty to create systems change through peer advocacy while offering the appropriate support and infrastructure (e.g., peer networks, compensation).	✓	✓			✓		
Collaborate with the York Region Food Council in the creation of advocacy tools and training geared towards municipal, provincial and federal governments.					✓		

What's Next?

- Cornerstone Document
 - Food System Report Card
 - Advocacy & Initiatives
- Endorsements



Questions

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